

No Child Left Behind Act
Improving Teacher Quality Higher Education Grants Program
Guidelines for Submission of Proposals
FY 2002-03

Background Information

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (PL107-110) authorizes the Commission to conduct a competitive awards program under Title II Part A *Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers and Principals*. The purpose of this part of the federal legislation is to provide support to:

increase student academic achievement through strategies such as improving teacher and principal quality and increasing the number of highly qualified teachers in the classroom and highly qualified principals and assistant principals in schools.

The Commission is authorized to provide a competitive grants program to partnerships comprised, at a minimum, of schools of education and arts and sciences from higher education institutions along with one or more high-need local education agency (LEA). Funds to the state are allocated based on the FY 2001 amount received under the former Eisenhower Professional Development and Class-Size Reduction programs. Any remaining funds from the federal appropriation are distributed through a formula based on the State's school-age population and percent of these children in families with incomes below the poverty level.

Under federal regulations, 2.5 percent of the Improving Teacher Quality Higher Education Grants (ITQHE) funds for the state are allocated to Commission to be used for the competitive grants program. The Commission will be awarding approximately \$850,000. Proposed projects may request up to \$75,000 in funds per year. Average awards have ranged from \$40,000 to \$60,000 during past funding cycles. The Commission is seeking proposals with maximum impact and therefore multi-year programs are allowable. The number of grants awarded will be determined primarily by the quality of the proposals submitted and the size of the negotiated final budgets in comparison to the total funds available. Equitable geographic distribution will also be considered in making awards assuming proposals are deemed to be of high quality.

Eligible Partnerships

Only eligible partnerships may apply for a competitive award. Partnerships **must be comprised of**, at a minimum, (1) a private or public institution of higher education and the division of the institution that prepares teachers and principals; (2) a school of arts and sciences at that institution; and (3) a high-need local education agency (LEA). In addition, an eligible partnership **may also include**: another LEA, a public charter school, an elementary school or secondary school, an educational service agency, a nonprofit educational organization, another institution of higher education, a school of arts and sciences within such an institution, the division that prepares teachers and principals within such an institution, a nonprofit cultural organization, an entity carrying out a pre-kindergarten program, a teacher organization, a principal organization, or a business. A list of high-need districts and low-performing schools (based on the Education Accountability Act's Report Cards 2001) can be found in **Appendix 1**.

Definitions

Definitions of the terms used in the *Guidelines* can be found in **Appendix 2**. These definitions are based on those in the federal legislation.

Eligible Projects and Project Activities

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 authorizes program funds to be used to support the following two major areas of partnership activities that are tied to enhancing student achievement in high-need LEAs:

- 1) Professional development activities in core academic subjects (English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography) to ensure that:
 - i) Teachers and highly qualified paraprofessionals (and, when appropriate principals) have subject matter knowledge in the academic subjects that the teachers teach (including knowledge of how to use computers and other technology to enhance student learning); and
 - ii) Principals have the instructional leadership skills to help them work more effectively with teachers to help students master core academic subjects.
- 2) Development and provision of assistance to LEAs and to their teachers, highly qualified paraprofessionals, or school principals, in providing sustained, high quality professional development activities that:
 - i) Ensure that those individuals can use challenging State academic content standards, student academic achievement standards, and State assessments to improve instructional practices and student academic achievement;
 - ii) May include intensive programs designed to prepare individuals to provide instruction related to the professional development described above to others in their schools; and
 - iii) May include activities of partnerships between one or more LEAs, one or more of the LEA's schools, and one or more IHEs for the purpose of improving teaching and learning at low-performing schools.

All projects must be of sufficient intensity and duration as to have a positive impact on the teaching and learning at the partner LEA(s). Multi-year proposals are encouraged to attain maximum impact on the target schools/districts. Effective projects typically have a year-round focus. Academic year projects should have a minimum of 75 contact hours that include follow-up activities that sustain change in classroom/school practice. If the program involves a summer institute/course, there should be a minimum of 45 contact hours over a minimum two-week period. The academic year follow-up requires a minimum of 30 contact hours. Follow-up activities may include but are not limited to group meeting, classroom observations by the project director, mentoring, and one-on-one meetings.

Effective Professional Development for Educators

The U.S. Department of Education envisions that effective professional development is of high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused. Effective professional development is considered to be much more than just a course or workshop. It is a set of activities that produce a demonstrable and measurable effect on student academic achievement. **Importantly**, *The No Child Left Behind Act* requires that the professional development to be offered must be grounded in scientifically based research. Definitions for both professional development and scientifically based research can be found in **Appendix 2**.

In addition, the South Carolina Department of Education has developed “*South Carolina Professional Development Standards*.” These standards are attached (**Appendix 3**) and should also be utilized in developing the proposed professional development activities.

Proposals submitted to the Commission must reflect these elements of high-quality long-term professional development.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

The proposed program **must be submitted by a partnership** as defined above. Variation from the minimum definition of a partnership will exclude the proposal from consideration by the Commission. The federal legislation requires that any partnership receiving both a grant from the Commission and an award under *The Partnership Program for Improving Teacher Preparation* in section 203 of Title II of the Higher Education Act (PL105-244) must coordinate activities under the two awards. *The Partnership Program for Improving Teacher Preparation* differs from the program contained in these Guidelines in that it is the Teacher Quality program under the **Higher Education Act of 1998** through which the S.C. Department of Education has funding. Many institutions in the State have received funds through the Division of Teacher Quality in addition to several institutions receiving separate awards from the U.S. Department of Education.

The proposed activities and strategies **must** be grounded in scientifically-based research. A research base must be presented that demonstrates the benefits of the proposed activities. A definition for this component is provided in **Appendix 2**

No single participant in an eligible partnership may use more than 50 percent of the funds made available to the partnership.

The partnership must ensure that the services are offered on an equitable basis to public and private school teachers.

Multi-year projects are allowable and encouraged. However, the Commission can only award up to two years of funding per federal fiscal year. If the proposed project is up to five years in duration, years three through five are contingent on appropriations from the U.S. Department of Education.

Funding Priorities

The funding priorities listed below have been developed in conjunction with the S.C. Department of Education. Proposals submitted from a partnership must address one of the priority areas listed below:

- enhance the content and pedagogical knowledge of teachers, qualified paraprofessionals, and principals (if appropriate) in the core academic subjects; such training should be directly tied to state content and assessment standards;
- provide training for teachers, qualified paraprofessionals, and principals (if appropriate) in the effective use of educational technology as an instructional tool for increasing student achievement;

- provide professional development for principals to enhance their instructional leadership skills; such training should be directly tied to state content and assessment standards;
- provide training for teachers, qualified paraprofessionals, and principals in the use and interpretation of assessment methods to enhance instructional practices and improve student learning;
- provide support to teachers and principals by training teachers to be mentors;
- provide professional development activities and support (mentoring) for new teachers that will assist in retention; or
- provide assistance to paraprofessionals in becoming highly qualified by 2005-06; such assistance could be tied to assisting paraprofessionals for the ETS ParaPro examination.

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

All proposals **must use the following format and must use the forms provided** at the end of this document. These *Guidelines* and forms are also available on the Commission's Home Page under Academic Affairs and Grants, Guidelines, and Request for Proposals (<http://www.che400.state.sc.us>).

1. Cover Sheet (form provided)
2. Abstract (limit, one page single-spaced)
3. Table of Contents
4. Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative should include the following information and should **not exceed twenty pages double-spaced**:

- a. statement of the demonstrated need for the program;
- b. statement of which funding priorities listed above will be addressed;
- c. a description of the purpose of the project and its objectives, including measurable objectives and the research base;

- d. a **detailed** description of the activities to be implemented, including follow-up, discussion of how these activities **meet the needs** of the partnership and target population, and the research base;
- e. a discussion of who will be served by the proposed project and an estimation of the number to be served.
- f. the expected outcomes and accomplishments of the project and how these are tied to improving student achievement.
- g. a **detailed** description of the methods and procedures to be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed project objectives, to include the design for data collection and a clear description of objectives to be measured (not simply pre- and post- surveys). The evaluation must include an assessment of how the activities have contributed to teacher practice and, where possible, student achievement. The proposal must include a well-articulated evaluation plan. Such a plan will determine the extent to which the project influenced changes in teacher knowledge and instructional practices in the classroom. A qualified external evaluator (required for multi-year projects) should provide a well-designed evaluation plan for assessing the project's goals and objectives.
- h. identification of key personnel and their qualifications and project-related responsibilities.

The use of appendices is discouraged but if supplemental information is included it **must not exceed** ten pages.

5. Partnership Description (form provided)

All applications **must** provide a description of the partnership including clearly defined roles of each of the partners.

6. Proposed Budget (form provided)

The Proposed Budget form must be completed and **must include a detailed Budget Justification/Explanation**. The justification must provide an explanation of the proposed budget categories. Eligible expenses are limited to those necessary to complete the proposed project and guidelines are listed below. The federal legislation requires that **no single participant in an eligible partnership may use more than 50 percent of the funds made available to the partnership**. Financial matching from participating school districts, non-public schools, other private organizations, and the sponsoring institution of higher education or non-profit organization is **strongly** encouraged. Proposed projects should have budget requests not in excess of \$75,000. Average awards have ranged from \$40,000 to \$60,000 during past funding cycles.

Multi-year projects are allowed but funding beyond the first two years of a project will be contingent upon federal funding in other other fiscal years (i.e., FY 2003-04, etc.).

Budget Guidelines:

- a. All personnel costs must be explained both in terms of percent of time spent on project activities and in terms of annual salaries.
- b. Indirect costs may be charged at the rate of 8 percent.
- c. Under participant costs, reasonable per diem or travel costs will be allowed. Costs for field trip expenses associated with program activities are allowable (i.e., van rental). Stipends may be allowed under justifiable circumstances but participants may not also receive free or reduced tuition.
- d. Budgets must clearly identify the use of external funds (those in addition to the requested Title II federal funds) to be used in the proposed project.
- e. Equipment purchases are allowable if they meet federal criteria as follows:
 - the equipment is necessary to operate the project properly and effectively;
 - existing equipment is not sufficient;
 - the costs of purchase of the equipment are reasonable in relationship to the costs of renting it; and
 - the percent of the cost of the equipment paid for with ITQHE funds is proportional to the percent of time the equipment is used for ITQHE activities.
- f. For projects that involve courses for credit, budgets have one of three options:
 - Grants may pay for regular tuition;
 - Grants may pay the instructional salaries and fringe benefits; or
 - Grants may pay for the cost of a contract course fee at the institution's approved rate.

The grant cannot support both the cost of tuition for participants and the salaries of instructors.

- g. Multi-year projects must submit separate budgets for each year requested.

7. Statement of Assurances (form provided)

The attached form must be signed by an authorized institutional representative to certify compliance with all regulations, policies, and requirements as they relate to acceptance and utilization of federal funds for the proposed project.

8. Intent to Submit Application (form provided)

This form must be submitted by October 7, 2002, so that the S.C. Commission on Higher Education can adequately plan for the proposal review process.

Acknowledgement of Support

An acknowledgement of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education must appear in any publication of materials based on or developed under this project as follows:

The activity which is the subject of this document (journal article, report, video, etc.) was produced under a grant from the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education and the U.S. Department of Education under the auspices of the Improving Teacher Quality Higher Education Grant Program.

All media announcements, public information, and promotional materials pertaining to Eisenhower-funded activities should acknowledge support of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education under the auspices of the federal Improving Teacher Quality Higher Education Grant Program.

SUBMISSION AND PROPOSAL REVIEW CRITERIA

Submit the **original** and 14 **unbound** copies of the application along with one copy on disk (PC-compatible; Word or text format) to:

Attn: Improving Teacher Quality Higher Education Grants Program
South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
1333 Main Street, Suite 200
Columbia, SC 29201

Proposals must be received (not postmarked) by no later than **5:00 p.m. on December 16, 2002.**

All proposals will be reviewed and rated using both quantitative and qualitative criteria by two methods: preliminary statewide peer review and final review by a panel consisting of representatives from Commission and State Department of Education staff, K-16 faculty, and the business community.

Each proposal will be rated according to the extent that it meets the *Guidelines*. In particular, the following criteria will be examined:

- the demonstrated importance of the need to be addressed;
- the extent to which the proposed activities will enhance teacher/principal quality;
- the extent to which the roles and duties of the partner members are clearly defined;
- the merit of the proposed project in terms demonstrated effectiveness of the proposed activities i.e., the proposed activities and strategies are grounded in scientifically based research
- the extent that the project designed is tied to raising student achievement;
- the extent to which the proposal reflects the S.C. Professional Development Standards;

- the extent to which the project addresses state curriculum and assessment standards (where applicable);
- the extent to which the evaluation plan is well-defined, has measurable outcomes, and assesses impact on participants;
- the extent to which the proposal targets funding priorities;
- the qualifications of the project director;
- the extent to which the budget is reasonable for the proposed activities and the adequacy of matching funds.

ADMINISTRATION OF AWARDS

Awards will be made by the Commission's Committee on Academic Affairs acting on behalf of the Commission in March 2003. Project duration will be from March 15, 2003 to May 15, 2004.

The institution's award will be disbursed via payments using State invoice procedures. Disbursement will occur through a cost-recovery basis only at pre-determined intervals, two of which occur after receipt of the interim report and after receipt of the final report (final cost recovery). All funding is contingent on Federal appropriations to the Title II Part A *Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers and Principals*.

Reporting requirements include an interim report, final report (June 15, 2004), and a site visit by the Commission's ITQHE Program Coordinator. Details about these procedures are supplied to award recipients. Multi-year projects will be required to submit an evaluation of the project from a qualified external reviewer.

A no-cost extension can be requested at the end of the grant period. However, grantees must submit a **written request** with **sufficient** justification as to why the proposed activities cannot be completed within the original timeframe. A single extension may not exceed six months in duration and must be for a minimum of one month.

Questions may be addressed to the Commission staff as follows:

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- Appendix 1 High Need LEAs and Low-Performing Schools
- Appendix 2 Definitions
- Appendix 3: South Carolina Professional Development Standards
- Appendix 4: Cover Page
 - Budget Form
 - Project Time Line
 - Statement of Assurances
 - Intent to Submit Application Form

